(d) the action taken by Government to check it?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) According to the information received from the Delhi Police, no illegal arms trade in Delhi's eastern border villages has come to notice recently.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.

Setting up National Security Council

1049. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have had under consideration the proposal to set up a National Security Council to evolve a comprehensive national security programme and to keep a constant vigil on security environment both internal and external and to monitor the implementation of such security programmes; and

(b) if so, the decision has since been taken thereon indicating precisely the constitution and functions of the contemplated Council?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI N.V.N. SOMU): (a) and (b) The National Security Council was set up on 24th August, 1990, with the Prime Minister as its Chairman and Ministers of Finance, Defence, Home Affairs and External Affairs as members. The main endeavour of the National Security Council is to evolve an integrated approach to policy making as it effects national security, taking account of the linkages between the evolving external situation in the political, military and economic fields and our domestic situation.

Scrapping of old vessels by Shipping Corporation of India

1050. SHRI MD. SALIM: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of old vessels scrapped by the Shipping Corporation of India during the last five years;

(b) the number of new vessels inducted in the fleet of SCI during that period;

(c) the time taken (berthing period) before declaring each vessel as scrap;

(d) the charge paid for berthing due to the delay in decision making; and

(e) the total earning on this account during this period?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN): (a) and (b) The Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. (SCI) had disposed off 24 vessels and acquired 22 vessels during the last five years.

(c) and (d) The SCI has reported that an everage time of 9-10 weeks was taken from the lay up of the vessel till a decision was taken by the SCI to dispose off the vessel. There was no delay in decision making and as such no charges were paid on this account.

(e) Rs. 113.37 crore was realised from the sale of these ships.

Meeting of SAARC Countries

1051. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some next meeting of SAARC countries is proposed to be held in August, 1996;

(b) if so, the details thereof with issues of agenda to be discussed;

(c) whether such a meeting will boost concessional trade between India and Pakistan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof; and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) Yes, Sir. The scond meeting of the Second Round of Inter-Government Negotiations on Trade Liberalisation under the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) has been proposed to be held in Pakistan in August, 1996. The exact dates have not yet been announced.

(b) Pursuant to the decision of the SAARC Council of Ministers following the operationalisation of the South Asian Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) on 7th December, 1995, a Second Round of negotiations on Trade Liberalisation is currently in Progress. The first meeting under the Second Round was held at Colombo on 14-15 March,